

Washington, DC—Today Congressman **Ciro Rodriguez** (TX-23) supported H.R. 1139, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Improvements Act, which reinvigorates the highly successful COPS program. The bill would put 50,000 additional police officers on the street over the next 5 years by authorizing \$1.25 billion a year for COPS hiring grants. It also authorizes \$350 million a year for COPS technology grants, and \$200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors. The bill passed the House by a large bipartisan vote of 342 – 78.

“Under the COPS program we have experienced a significant drop in crime and many of our law enforcement agencies need this funding more than ever as state and local budgets face shortfalls due to the economic climate we find ourselves in,” said Rodriguez. “This bill will aid our law enforcement efforts and allow for new jobs to be created in many communities.”

Created in 1994, the COPS hiring grants program was an enormously successful, popular program – helping local law enforcement agencies to hire more than 117,000 additional police officers, in every state in the union, from 1995 to 2005.

Specifically, the bill authorizes \$1.25 billion per year for hiring grants, which can be used for such purposes as hiring officers to engage in community policing, serve as School Resource Officers, or engage in counter-terrorism duties. It also reinstitutes the Troops-to-COPS Program (which lapsed in 2005), which awards grants to hire former members of the Armed Forces as career law enforcement officers.

In addition to the hiring grants, the bill also authorizes \$350 million a year for the next five years for technology grants. These grants will allow police agencies to purchase things like lap top computers for patrol cars, crime mapping software, and interoperable communications equipment.

In addition, the bill authorizes \$200 million per year to help hire community prosecutors. The bill also authorizes funds for community prosecuting programs – including programs that assign prosecutors to try cases in specific geographic areas.

In endorsing the bill, the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) points out, “Currently,

most state and local prosecutors, due to budget constraints, are either in a hiring freeze or are having to lay off staff.” Other organizations supporting the bill include the National Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, National Sheriffs’ Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Narcotics Officers’ Associations Coalition, National District Attorneys Association, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

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